5. 7227/7228 Vasco-Vijayawada Express to Howrah (4 days a week)

6. 8507/8508 Visakhapatnam-Nizamuddin Hirakund Express to Amritsar.

Increase in Frequency:

1. 2811/2812 Hatia-Lokmanya Tilak (T) Express from weekly to bi-weekly.

2. 5625/5626 Bangalore-Guwahati Express from bi-weekly to tri-weekly.

New rail line between Mehsana-Ambaji

†3784. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have taken any action to conduct survey of new railway line between Mehsana-Ambaji *via* Taranga;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) A survey has been taken up for gauge conversion of Mehsana-Taranga Hill (57 kms.) with extension from Taranga Hill to Ambaji (55 kms.)

Rail fares

3785. SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that he has announced that rail fares would not be raised, but indirectly the railways are taxing the passengers by way of increase in cancellation of reservation charges, charging additional fares on recently names super-fast trains, increase in the reservation charges, etc.;

(b) whether a passenger is not issued a ticket for any en-route station if the train does not stop there, as against the earlier practice of issuing such tickets upto main halts en-route;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) whether the above new measures are resulting in convenience to the genuine passengers, specially the military personnel; and

(d) if so, what is the action plan of Government to address the above issues?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) As announced by Railway Minister in Budget Speech, there has not been any increase in Railway's basic fare. However, Reservation charges and additional charges for Superfast trains have been reviewed and increased for special services rendered.

(b) Yes, Sir. From 1st April, 2006, computerized tickets with telescopic benefit in fares are issued for any station where there is stoppage of the train in which the reservation is sought. Passenger are permitted to break journey as per extant rules and obtain subsequent reservation by any train.

(c) No formal representation has been received from Defence.

(d) Does not arise.

Electrification and Gauge Conversion in Punjab and Maharashtra

3786. SHRI DARA SINGH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the current policy of his Ministry regarding electrification of railway tracks/gauge conversion;

(b) how many proposals for electrification of railway tracks/gauge conversion were received from the Governments of Punjab and Maharashtra during the years 2005-06 and 2006-07 till date;

(c) how many proposals of gauge conversion/electrification of rail tracks were taken up during 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2006-07; and

(d) if so, what budgetary provisions made for on going above mentioned projects State-wise, year-wise and project-wise, till date?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Policy for Electrification and Gauge Conversion are as under:

Electrification projects are considered primarily on economic considerations excepting projects justified as operational necessity. The